

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask Members to vote "no" on the previous question, bring up the aviation security bill, reject the Republican tax cut bill and support the Democratic alternative to strengthen our economy.

The Republican tax cut bill is disappointing for two important reasons. First, while it is important to pass legislation to strengthen our economy, it is more pressing today to pass a strong airline security bill to put this responsibility in the hands of Federal law enforcement officers. This is the people's highest priority. Congress and the country should take action on this priority today.

Millions of Americans witnessed what happened on September 11. They watched as hijackers with hate in their hearts smashed two planes, full of innocent civilians, into the Twin Towers. They heard about what happened in Pennsylvania and in the Pentagon, and they are resolved that we do as much as we can to make sure that what happened on September 11 never happens again.

It has been 6 weeks, 6 weeks, since this happened.

We were able to get on the floor in a matter of days with a bill to cap the liability of the airlines. I supported that bill. I thought it needed to be passed quickly. But I also thought that simultaneously we should be passing a bill on airline security and a bill to help the unemployed workers of the airlines that have been partially out of business in the last 6 weeks.

It is unexplainable to me that we could be here 6 weeks after this event and not have an airline security bill on this floor long ago. I plead with my friends in the other party to put that bill on the floor today or tomorrow. Let us not leave this week with passengers and flight attendants and pilots worried about security.

We have got to do it. I have been on flights to St. Louis. You have discussions going on with people on the plane trying to figure out who is going to be the vigilante committee to take care of security on the plane if something happens. It is unacceptable to leave here this week without doing this bill.

I do not know who is going to win. I have my views, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. Oberstar) has his views, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. Young) has his

views. On the other side, others have different views. I do not know who is going to win. Let us just put it up. Let us see who prevails. Let us let the House work its will.

Well, the other issue is what to do about the employees, and I just urge Members to understand that this stimulus bill is the wrong bill with the wrong provisions at the wrong time. People who lost their jobs as a result of September 11 are today worried about two things: one, where are they going to get the money to support their families, to pay their lease or their rent or their mortgage payment? How are they going to afford food and clothing, and how are they going to afford health insurance, which is their great need?

This Republican bill does not help them. It does not help them as much as they deserve to be helped. In fact, it does almost nothing for them. It sends money to the States without clear direction of how the money should be spent. It could be used for other things in the unemployment system. And there is not enough to really help people with the greatest need they have, which is COBRA, to be able to continue their health insurance.

This bill is a giant tax giveaway to the largest

corporations and the wealthiest; it violates the principles to which the bicameral bipartisan budget leaders agreed; and most egregious in my view, is that almost all the assistance goes to the big givers and special interests. It gives 86 percent of the total benefits to special interests that do not need the help. It permanently repeals the alternative minimum tax for corporations. It gives immediate refunds to companies that paid this tax as far back as 1986. That is \$21 billion in total refunds and \$5.5 billion to eight of the largest corporations in America.

Now, we did the airline bill that gave billions of dollars that were needed for the airlines that were on the ground. I guess now we are going to come back and make sure every large corporation in the country gets billions of dollars.

It contains a permanent reduction in the capital gains tax to benefit again the top 2 percent of income earners. It accelerates tax rate cuts, but the break does not help 75 percent of the people who pay income taxes. The workers who have lost their jobs get bread crumbs from this bill. This bill gives \$9 billion to Governors to spend on unemployment, but CBO estimates that only \$1 billion or \$2 billion will go to the people

challenge that this country has ever faced. I just urge Members to understand that this bill is not consistent with that value and that sentiment.

I plead with Members to vote for our alternative. Let us help everybody. Let us bring America forward together.